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THE HIGH COURT OF ORISSA : CUTTACK

NOTIFICATION

The 1st September, 2025

VIDEO CONFERENCING RULES

Object and Reasons

No.1070/R.─ Whereas, in order to avoid delay in judicial proceeding due to non-availability of parties, Advocates, witnesses and accused physically, it is expedient to formalize and enable use of electronic communication and other audio-video electronic means for the purpose of conducting trial, inquiry and proceeding under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (No. 46 of 2023);

And, whereas, the BNSS under section 54, 63, 64, 70, 71, 94, 154, 183, 187, 193, 209, 227, 230,231, 251, 254, 262, 265, 266, 308, 310, 316, 336, 355, 356, 392, and 530 recognizes use of audio-video electronic means and other forms of electronic communication for different proceedings;

And, whereas, Section 530 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (BNSS) provides that all trials, inquiries and proceedings under this Sanhita, including examination of complainants and witnesses, recording of evidence in inquiries and trials and all appellate proceedings or any other proceeding, may be held in electronic mode, by use of electronic communication or use of audio-video electronic means;

And, whereas, there is no restriction on Civil Courts in using video conferencing facilities in conducting trial;

And, whereas, the High Court of Orissa and District Judiciary in the State of Odisha have been using video conferencing facilities for conducting inquiries and trials in civil as well as criminal proceedings;

Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by Article 225 and Article 227 of the Constitution of India, and all other enabling sections of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (No. 46 of 2023), the High Court of Orissa with previous approval of the Governor of Odisha, is pleased to make the following audio-video electronic communication rules for the High Court of Orissa and District Judiciary of the state, namely:─

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

1. Short title, Application and Commencement. -

(1) These Rules shall be called "The High Court of Orissa and District Courts Use of Electronic Communication and Audio-Video Electronic Means Rules, 2025".

(2) These provisions shall be applicable to the High Court of Orissa, all District Courts and tribunals falling under the jurisdiction of High Court, as well as to all judicial, departmental, Lok Adalats and mediation proceedings in pending cases.

(3) They shall come into force from the date of their publication in the *Odisha Gazette*.

2. Definitions. -

(1) In these Rules, unless the context otherwise requires, -

(a) "Advocate" means and include an Advocate entered in any roll maintained under the provisions of the Advocates Act, 1961 and shall for the purpose of these rules, include Prosecuting Officers and Government Pleaders;

(b) "Advocate's Remote Point" means a place from where an Advocate or Advocates may appear through a live link and shall include Advocate's chamber or office or a place notified by the Bar for video conferencing;

(c) "Commissioner" means a person appointed as Commissioner under the provisions of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (46 of 2023) or any other law for the time being in force;

(d) "Co-ordinator" means a person nominated as Co-ordinator under Rule 5;

(e) "Court" includes a physical Court and a virtual Court or a tribunal.

(f) "Court Point" means the courtroom or the place where the Court is physically convened, or the place where a Commissioner or an Inquiry Officer holds proceedings pursuant to the directions of the Court;

(g) "Court room" means the place or room or enclosed space in which Court proceedings are held;

(h) "Designated Place" means any one or more places specified where the facilities are made available for use of electronic communication or use of audio-video electronic means with Court Points. It shall also include Vulnerable Witness Deposition Centre from where evidence of such witnesses may be recorded following the VWDC guidelines issued by the High Court from time to time;

(i) "Designated Video Conferencing Software" means a software approved by the High Court for the use of video conferencing or other audio-video electronic communication;

(j) "High Court" means the High Court of Orissa;

(k) "Live link" means and includes a live link for audio-video electronic communication or other arrangements whereby a witness, an accused, party, Advocate or any other person is required by Court to remain present virtually in the Court room by use of electronic communication or use of audio-video electronic means;

(l) "Remote Point" means a place where any person is required to be present or appear through a live link and includes Designated Place from where submissions may be made before the Court but does not include Advocate's Remote Point;

(m) "Remote User" means a user participating in Court proceedings through video conferencing at a Designated Place or Advocates Remote Point;

(n) "Required Person" includes:

(i) a person who is to be examined as a witness, complainant or otherwise; or

(ii) person in whose presence certain proceedings are to be recorded or conducted including an accused; or

(iii) an Advocate or a party in person; or

(iv) any person including victim who is required to make submissions before the Court; or

(v) any other person who is permitted by the Court to appear through video conferencing or other modes of audio visual electronic communication;

(o) "Rules" shall mean these rules and any reference to a rule or sub-rule shall be a reference to a rule or sub-rule of these rules;

(2) Words and expressions used and not defined in these Rules shall have the same meaning as assigned to them in the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (C.P.C), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (BNSS), Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023 (BSA), Information Technology Act, 2000 (IT Act), the General Clauses Act, 1897, and the Odisha General Clauses Act, 1937.

3. Construction of references. -

Unless the context otherwise requires, any reference to Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023 in these Rules shall include

reference to Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 and Indian Evidence Act, 1872 respectively under the corresponding provisions.

CHAPTER II

GENERAL PRINCIPLES - 1

4. Implementation of Video Conferencing under BNSS Provisions. -

(1) **Electronic Hearings (BNSS Sec 530)**

All trials, inquiries, and proceedings may be conducted electronically, including:

Examination of complainants and witnesses,

Recording of evidence,

Appellate and other judicial proceedings.

(2) **Appearance via Video Conferencing (BNSS Sec 154, 355)**

Persons required to appear before the Court may do so via video conferencing, including cases where the accused is absent.

(3) **Accused in Judicial Custody (BNSS Sec 187)**

Accused persons may be presented before the Court via video conferencing, except for the first appearance, which requires physical presence.

(4) **Framing of Charges (BNSS Sec 251)**

Charges may be read and explained to the accused through video conferencing, with their plea recorded electronically.

(5) **Evidence of Witnesses (BNSS Sec 254, 265, 266, 310, 356)**

Witness testimonies and depositions may be recorded via audio-video means in designated locations.

(6) **Deposition of evidence of any Police Officer or Public Servants (BNSS Sec 254)**

Testimonies of public servants may be recorded electronically to expedite legal proceedings.

(7) **Discharge of Accused (BNSS Sec 262)**

Courts may examine the accused via electronic means before granting discharge.

(8) **Examination of Accused in Custody (BNSS Sec 316)**

Accused persons in custody may be examined electronically, with signature verification required within 72 hours.

(9) **Evidence from Public Servants, Experts and Police Officers (BNSS Sec 336)**

Public officials, forensic experts, and Police Officers may provide evidence via video conferencing.

(10) **Judgment Pronouncement (BNSS Sec 392)**

Accused persons in custody may hear their judgment via video conferencing.

(11) **Presence of Accused during Evidence Recording (BNSS Sec 308)**

Accused persons must be present, either physically or via video conferencing, during the recording of evidence.

CHAPTER III

GENERAL PRINCIPLES -2

5. General Principles Governing Video Conferencing and other modes of Audio-video electronic communication. -

Subject to the provisions hereinafter contained, video conferencing and other modes of audio-visual electronic communication may be used at all stages of judicial proceedings and proceedings conducted by the Court, where a person is required to be present or appear is not physically present in Court room;

(i) All proceedings conducted by a Court via video conferencing and other modes of audio visual electronic communication shall be judicial proceedings and all parties, decorum and protocols shall be applicable to these proceedings;

(ii) All relevant statutory provisions applicable to judicial proceedings including provisions of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, Contempt of Courts Act, 1971, Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023 and Information Technology Act, 2000, shall apply to proceedings conducted by video conferencing;

(iii) Subject to maintaining independence, impartiality and credibility of judicial proceedings, and subject to such directions as the High Court may issue, Courts may adopt such technological advances as may become available from time to time;

(iv) Courts shall use only High Court/Government approved and secured video conferencing platforms equipped with end-to-end encryption to protect data and privacy;

(v) There shall be no unauthorized recording of the proceedings by any person or entity. Any unauthorized access, unauthorized activities, hacking attempts, or security breaches must be reported immediately and addressed in accordance with the law;

(vi) These Rules as applicable to a Court shall *mutatis mutandis* apply to a Commissioner appointed by the Court to record evidence and to an Inquiry Officer conducting an inquiry;

(vii) Unless expressly permitted by Court, no person, either at Court Point or at Designated Place or at Remote Point or Advocate's Remote Point, shall record or publish the proceedings conducted by video conferencing or other modes of audio-visual electronic communication;

6. Identification of person appearing through video conferencing or other modes of audio-visual electronic communication. -

(i) The Required person shall provide an identity proof as recognized by the Government of India or State Government, Union Territory to the Court Point Coordinator by electronic communication. In the absence of such a document, an affidavit attested by any of the authorities referred to in section 139 of the C.P.C. or section 333 of the BNSS, shall be submitted.

(ii) The affidavit shall, *inter alia*, state that the person, who is shown to be the party to the proceedings or as a witness, is the same person who is to depose at the virtual proceeding.

(iii) A copy of the proof of identity or affidavit, as the case may be, shall form part of the record and the same will be made available to the opposite party upon request.

(iv) In cases where identity proof of the witnesses appearing through video conferencing is otherwise readily available on record to the satisfaction of the Court as well as of the Coordinator of the remote Point (such as photographs provided by Police at the time of filing charge sheet etc.) then the proof of identity of the witness may not be insisted upon at the Remote Point.

7. Facilities recommended for Video Conferencing. -

(i) Each courtroom should be equipped with video conferencing facility to enable seamless connectivity with stakeholders. This integration will eliminate the need to move to a separate dedicated room for virtual hearings, ensuring efficiency, saving time, and enhancing judicial proceedings.

(ii) A dedicated and exclusive video conferencing center should be established promptly at each district and Tehsil level.

(iii) A dedicated space for video conferencing within police stations, prisons, prosecution offices, forensic departments, and other Designated Places.

The following equipment are recommended for conducting proceedings by video conferencing at the Court Point and the Remote Point:

Computer	**Desktop and Laptop**
Network and Internet Connectivity	High-Speed Internet Connection (Minimum 50 Mbps) -Ensures seamless video transmission without lag; Backup Internet Connection- A secondary connection to prevent disruptions; Dedicated LAN/Wi-Fi Setup - Ensures stable and secure connectivity;
Video Equipment	High-Resolution Cameras (Full HD/4K) To capture clear video feeds of participants; Adjustable and Multiple Camera Angles - Enables focusing on the judge, lawyers, accused, or witnesses; Document Visualizer – Enable capturing and displaying images of documents in real time;
Audio Equipment	Noise-Canceling Microphones - Reduces background noise and ensures clear audio transmission; High-Quality Speakers - Provides clear sound output for participants; Echo-Cancellation and Acoustic Treatment - Enhances audio clarity by minimizing reverberation;
Display and Projection Equipment	Large Display Screens (LED/Projectors) - For clear visibility of remote participants; Multiple Screen Setup (Optional) - Allows simultaneous viewing of different participants;

Software and Encryption Standards	End-to-End Encrypted Video Conferencing Software -Ensures secure communication; Firewall and VPN Protection Prevents unauthorized access; Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) for Users - Ensures identity verification; Secure Login Credentials for Each Session - Limits access to authorized personnel;
Recording and Documentation	Court-Approved Recording Mechanism - Allows secure documentation of hearings; Transcription Services – Automated/manual transcription of Court proceedings; Cloud or Local Storage Options - Secure storage for recorded sessions;
IT Support and Maintenance	On-Site Technical Team Ensures quick resolution of technical issues; 24/7 Remote IT Support Provides assistance for troubleshooting; Regular Equipment Maintenance Ensures uninterrupted functionality;
Power Backup	Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) System- Prevents power outages from disrupting proceedings; Backup Generators For prolonged power failures, etc.

Provided that the High Court may from time to time include any other equipment(s), devices(s) required for conducting proceedings by video conferencing.

8. The designated video conferencing software to be procured by High Court shall facilitate following minimum requirements. -

(i) an online, real-time collaboration software with features like video, voice, screen sharing, document sharing, presentation, recording etc.

(ii) the solution should have a whiteboard for flashing messages and recording meetings or sessions.

(iii) the complete access log of the different users with extended reports, including IP/Device details/Application details, should be provided with each meeting room.

(iv) the platform should be hosted on an India-based data centre with a 100% Disaster recovery site.

(v) the platform must offer cross-platform functionality, ensuring seamless operation across various operating systems, including Windows, Linux, macOS, IOS etc., to accommodate diverse technology ecosystems of all participants and guarantee a consistent user experience regardless of the operating system used.

(vi) the platform must be scalable to multi point connectivity with 500 user logins at a time,

(vii) the platform must provide private and confidential Breakout rooms; between multiple users,

(viii) the platform may be capable of synchronizing and scheduling with cause list of cases by Advocates with waiting lobby and automatic pulling according to the cause list;

(ix) the platform must provide master control facility at Court's end, recording and archiving facility at Court Point, server or cloud

(x) the platform must provide audit trail facility of the proceedings and also provision of a firewall.

9. Appointment of Coordinators. -

(1) There shall be a Coordinator both at the Court Point and at the Designated Place from where any required person is to be examined or heard or is directed to remain present. However, Coordinator may be required at the Remote Point only when a witness or a person accused of an offence is to be examined;

(2) In all the Courts, one or more persons nominated by the High Court or the Principal District and Sessions Judge concerned within whose jurisdiction the respective Court is present, shall perform the functions of the coordinators at the Designated Place.

(3) The Court may appoint any Court official as a Coordinator at the Court Point.

(4) The Coordinator at the Designated Place/Remote Point may be any of the following:

Sub Rule	**Where the Advocate or Required Person is at the following Point:-**	**The Remote Point Coordinator shall be:-**
9.(4).1	Overseas	An official of an Indian Consulate/the relevant Indian Embassy / the relevant High Commission of India;
9.(4).2	Court of another state or union territory of India	Any Authorized official nominated by the concerned District Judge;
9.(4).3	Mediation Centre or office of District Legal Services Authority	Any Authorized person official nominated by the Chairperson or Secretary of the concerned District Legal Services Authority;
9.(4).4	Jail or prison	The concerned Jail Superintendent or Officer- in-charge of the prison;
9.(4).5	Hospitals administered by the Central Government, the State Government or local bodies	Medical Superintendent or an official authorized by them or the person in charge of the said hospital;
9.(4).6	Observation Home, Special Home, Children's Home, Shelter Home, or any institution referred to as a Child Care Institution and where the Required Person is a juvenile or a child or a person who is an inmate of such Child Care Institution.	The Superintendent or Officer in charge of that Child Care Institution or an official authorized by them;
9.(4).7	Women's Rescue Homes, Protection Homes, Shelter Homes, Nari Niketans or any institution referred to as a women's facility (collectively referred to as women's facilities).	The Superintendent or Officer-in-charge of the women's facility or an official authorized by them;

9.(4).8	In custody, care or employment of any other government office, organization or institution (collectively referred to as institutional facilities).	The Superintendent or Officer-in-charge of the institutional facility or an official authorized by them;
9.(4).9	Forensic Science Lab	The Administrative Officer- in-charge or their nominee;
9.(4).10	In case of any other location	The concerned Court may nominate any public servant of public official of the concerned department to render services as a Coordinator to ensure that the proceedings are conducted in a fair, impartial and independent manner and according to the directions issued by the Court in that behalf.

(5) Notwithstanding the provisions of Clause 9.(4).1, where witness examination is to take place in a criminal case of a person located outside the country, the provisions of the BNSS, 2023 (Section 110 & Chapter 8) and "Comprehensive Guidelines for investigation abroad and issue of Letters Rogatory (LRs)/Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) Request and Service of Summons / Notices/ Judicial documents in respect of Criminal Matters prevailing at that time" will be followed to the extent they comport with the provisions of the BNSS and BSA.

(6) When a required person is at any of the Designated Place/Remote Point and video conferencing facilities are not available at any of those places, the concerned Court shall formally request the District Judge, in whose jurisdiction the Remote Point is situated to appoint a Co-ordinator and to provide a video conferencing facility from proximate and suitable Court premises.

10. Preparatory arrangements. -

(1) The Co-ordinator at the Designated Place/Remote Point shall ensure that;

(a) the required persons scheduled to appear in a particular proceeding are ready at the Remote Point/Designated Place for video conferencing well before the scheduled time;

(b) no unauthorized recording device is used;

(c) no unauthorized person enters the Remote Point or Designated Place when the video conference is in progress;

(d) the person being examined is not prompted, tutored, coaxed, induced or coerced in any manner by any person and that the person being examined does not refer to any document, script or device without the permission of the Court concerned during the course of examination;

(2) Where the witness to be examined through video conferencing or other audio-visual electronic communication requires or if it is otherwise expedient to do so, the Court shall give sufficient notice in advance, setting out the schedule of video conferencing and in appropriate cases may provide the copies of all or any part of the relevant documents in electronic form to the Co-ordinator of the concerned Remote Point;

(3) Before the scheduled video conferencing, the Court shall ensure that the Co-ordinator at the Designated Place or Remote Point receives in electronic form, copies of all or any part of the documents which may be required for recording of evidence, or for reference of the witness. However, Co-ordinator shall allow such documents in electronic form to be used by the required person only with the permission of the Court;

(4) Whenever required, the Court shall order the Co-ordinator at the Remote Point or at the Court Point to provide-

(a) a translator in case the person to be examined is not conversant with the official language of the Court;

(b) an expert in sign languages in case the person to be examined is impaired in speech and/or hearing;

(c) an interpreter or a special educator, as the case may be, in case a person to be examined is differently abled, either temporarily or permanently;

(d) a person for reading of documents in case the person to be examined is visually challenged.

CHAPTER IV
PROCEDURE FOR VIDEO CONFERENCING

11. Appearance through video conferencing and other modes of audio-visual electronic communication. -

(1) In criminal cases, any party to the proceedings or witness, save and except where proceedings are initiated at the instance of the Court or on request of public

prosecutor, may move a request for presence and proceedings through video conferencing. (SCHEDULE - II)

(2) In civil cases, the Court may, as its discretion or on request of any of the parties, initiate process for hearing of any case through video conferencing and other modes of audio-visual electronic communication.

(3) Any proposal to move a request for video conferencing should first be discussed with the other party or parties to the proceeding, except where it is not possible or inappropriate, in cases such as urgent applications. On receipt of such a request and upon hearing all concerned persons, the Court shall pass an appropriate order after ascertaining that the application (especially where it is filed for recording evidence) is not filed with an intention to impede a fair trial or to delay the proceedings.

(4) While allowing a request for video conferencing the Court may also fix the schedule for convening the video conferencing.

(5) An Advocate may appear from advocate's Remote Point for making submissions or for examination of witnesses.

(6) Where video conferencing proceedings are conducted for making oral submissions, the order may require the Advocate or party in person to submit written arguments and precedents, if any, in advance on the official email-id of the Court concerned.

12. Service of processes. -

(i) Processes issued to a witness who is to be examined through video conferencing, shall mention the date, time and venue of the concerned Designated Place and shall direct the witness to attend in person along with proof of identity. If a person is examined with reference to a particular document then the process to witness must be accompanied by a copy of the document:

Provided that nothing in this rule shall preclude a court from conducting trials, inquires and proceedings in electronic mode, by use of electronic communication or use of audio-video electronic means.

(ii) The existing rules regarding service of summons and the consequences for non-attendance, as provided in the C.P.C., the BNSS or by any method prescribed by the High Court of Orissa, from time to time, shall apply with respect to service of summons for proceedings conducted by video conferencing.

13. Examination of persons and witnesses through video conferencing and other modes of audio-visual electronic communication. -

(1) The person being examined through video conferencing and other modes of audio-visual electronic communication shall ordinarily be examined during the working hours of the Court concerned or at such time as the Court may deem fit.

(2) The oath will be administered to the person who is examined by the Co-ordinator at the Court Point.

(3) Where the person who is examined, or the accused to be tried, is in custody, the statement or, as the case may be, the testimony may be recorded through video conferencing.

(4) Where the person being examined is an accused, the Court shall provide adequate opportunity to consult in privacy with his counsel before, during and after the video conferencing.

(5) The Court shall read over and explain the evidence recorded to the witness and obtain the signature of the person being examined on the transcript immediately after the examination is concluded. The signed transcript shall form part of the record of the judicial proceedings. The signature on the transcript of the person being examined shall be obtained in either of the following ways.-

(a) If digital signatures are available at both the concerned Court Point and Remote Point including that the person to be examined, the transcript digitally signed by the Presiding Officer at the Court Point shall be sent by the designated video conferencing software or official e-mail to the Co-ordinator at Remote Point, where the person being examined and the Co-ordinator at the Remote Point shall digitally sign the transcript and the signed document shall be transmitted through the designated video conferencing software or official e-mail of the Court Point and shall be made a part of the judicial record;

(b) If digital signatures are available at both the concerned Court Point and Remote Point, the copy of the transcript digitally signed by the Presiding Officer at the Court Point shall be sent by the designated video conferencing software or official e-mail to the Co-ordinator at Remote Point where a print out of the same shall be taken and signed by the person being examined. A scanned copy of the transcript digitally signed by the Co-ordinator at the Remote Point shall be transmitted by the designated video conferencing software or official e-mail of the Court Point. The hard copy shall also be

dispatched within three working days by the Co-ordinator at the Remote Point to the Court Point by recognized courier or registered speed post and shall be made a part of the judicial record.

(c) If digital signatures are not available, the printout of the transcript shall be signed by the presiding Judge, at the Court Point and shall be sent in non-editable scanned format by the designated video conferencing software or official e-mail account of the Designated Place or e-mail of the Co-ordinator at Remote Point where a printout of the same shall be taken and signed by the person examined and countersigned by the Coordinator at the Remote Point. A non-editable scanned format of the transcript so signed shall be sent by the Co-ordinator at the Remote Point by the designated video conferencing software or official e-mail to the Court Point where a print out of the same shall be taken and shall be made a part of the judicial record. The hard copy shall also be dispatched within three working days by the Coordinator at the Remote Point to the Court Point by recognized courier or registered speed post.

(6) The Court may, at the request of a person to be examined, or on its own motion, taking into account the best interest of the person to be examined, direct appropriate measures to protect the privacy of the person examined bearing in mind aspects such as age, gender, physical condition and recognized customs and practices.

(7) The Co-ordinator at the Designated Place shall ensure that no person is present at the Remote point, save and except the person being examined and those whose presence is deemed administratively necessary by the Coordinator for the proceedings.

(8) The Court may also impose such other conditions as are necessary in for effective hearing of cases through video conferencing and other modes of audio-video electronic communication.

(9) If the Court thinks fit, the required person may be permitted to connect through video conferencing or other modes of audio-visual electronic communication from the place of his residence or work:

Provided that evidence of a witness shall be recorded only from the Designated Place, except in situation hereinafter provided.

(10) (a) Where a required person is not capable of reaching the Court Point or the Designated Place due to sickness or physical infirmity, or whose presence cannot be secured without undue delay or expense, the Court may authorize conduct of video conferencing from the place at which such person is located.

In such circumstances the Court may direct the use of portable video conferencing systems and ensure presence as it may deem fit.

(b) Subject to such orders, as the Court may pass, in case any party or person authorized by the party is desirous of being physically present at the Remote Point at the time of recording of the testimony, such party shall make its own arrangement for appearance or representation, as the case may be, at the Remote Point.

(11) Where the Court is of opinion, for the reasons recorded in writing that, evidence of the witness cannot be effectively recorded, may decline to examine such witness through video conferencing.

(12) The Court shall be at liberty to record the demeanor of the person who is examined and while recording the evidence of a witness through video conferencing, the Court shall adhere to the procedures prescribed under the law.

(13) The examination shall as far as practicable, proceed without interruption or the grant of unnecessary adjournments:

Provided that the Court or the Commissioner, as the case may be, shall be at liberty to determine whether an adjournment should be granted, and if so, on what ground.

(14) Recording of evidence of official witnesses including Scientific Officers, Police Officers, Medical Officers and anyone who is to depose in official capacity shall ordinarily be done by Video Conferencing subject to the concerned Court making all arrangements and giving the witness a precise time slot for recording of his / her evidence:

Provided that the Court, on its motion or an application of any party, for reasons to be recorded in writing, may require the concerned witness to remain present in person for examination.

(15) An audio-visual recording of the examination of person examined shall be preserved and an encrypted master copy with hash value shall be retained for a duration of six months from the date of the recording.

14. Exhibiting or showing documents to witness or accused at a Remote Point. -

If in the course of examination of a person at a Remote Point by video conferencing, it is necessary to show a document to the person, the Court may permit the document to be shown in the following manner;

(a) If the document is at Court Point, by transmitting the document through document visualizer;

(b) If the document is at Court Point, but document visualizer is not available, by transmitting a copy or image of the document to the Remote Point electronically through the designated video conferencing software or official e-mail; and

(c) If the document is at the Remote Point, by transmitting a copy or image of the document to the Court Point electronically through the designated video conferencing software or official e-mail. The hard copy of the document counter signed by the witness and the Coordinator at the Designated Place shall also be dispatched to the Court Point and shall form part of the case record.

15. Ensuring seamless video conferencing. -

(1) The Co-ordinator at Court Point shall provide the live link of the video conferencing hearing with Advocates or the required person.

(2) If the proceedings are carried out from any place other than a Remote Point, the Co-ordinator, if any, at such Remote Point shall ensure compliance of all technical requirements.

(3) The Co-ordinator at the Court Point shall be in contact with the concerned Advocate or the required person and guide them in regard to the fulfillment of technical and other requirements for executing a successful hearing through video conferencing. Any problem faced by such Advocate or the required person shall be resolved by the Co-ordinator at Court Point.

(4) The Co-ordinator at the Court Point shall ensure that any document or audio-visual files, emailed by the Advocate or the required person, are duly received at the Court Point, shall form part of the case record.

(5) The Co-ordinator at the Court Point shall also conduct a trial video conferencing, preferably thirty minutes prior to the scheduled video conferencing in order to ensure that all the technical systems are in working condition at both the Court Point and the Remote Point.

(6) The Co-ordinator at the Court Point shall at the scheduled time, connect the Remote User to the Court.

(7) On completion of each day of the video conferencing proceeding, the Court shall mention in the order sheet the time and duration of the proceeding, the software used (in case the Software used is not the Designated Video Conferencing Software), the issue on which the Court was addressed and the documents, if any, that were produced and transmitted online.

(8) In case a digital recording is tendered, the Court shall record its duration in the order sheet along with all other requisite details.

(9) The Court shall also record its satisfaction as to clarity, sound and connectivity for both Court Users and Remote Users.

(10) On the completion of video conferencing, if a Remote User is of the opinion that he is prejudiced due to poor video or audio quality, the Remote User shall immediately inform the Co-ordinator at the Court Point, who shall in turn, communicate this information to the Court without any delay and the Court shall consider the grievance and if finds substance in the grievance, it may declare the hearing to be incomplete and the parties may be asked to re-connect or make a physical appearance in Court.

16. Remand. -

The Court may authorize detention in judicial custody, of any person accused of an offence, by video conferencing or other modes of audio-visual electronic communication as per the provisions of Section 187 BNSS:

Provided that if the accused is already in judicial custody, whether of same Court or some other Court or is undergoing sentence, the Court may further remand him during inquiry or trial under section 346(2) of the BNSS through video conferencing or other modes of audio-visual electronic communication.

17. Plea bargaining. -

The Court may also use the modes of audio-visual electronic communication for the purpose of plea bargaining under Chapter XXIII of the BNSS.

18. Record of proceedings through audio-visual electronic communication. -

Wherever any proceeding is carried out by the Court under these rules by taking recourse to the modes of audio visual electronic communication, the Court shall mention in the order sheet, that the hearing is conducted through video conferencing.

CHAPTER V
GENERAL PROCEDURE

19. General Procedure. -

(1) The procedure set out hereinafter in this chapter is without prejudice to the procedure indicated elsewhere in these rules where proceedings are conducted through video conferencing or other modes of audio visual electronic communication.

(2) The Co-ordinator at the Court Point shall ensure that video conferencing is conducted only through a designated video conferencing software:

Provided that in the event of a technical fault or for any other sufficient cause, the Court may for reasons to be recorded in writing, permit the use of a software other than the designated video conferencing software for video conferencing in that particular proceeding:

Provided further that nothing contained in these rules shall prevent a Court, after recording its reasons in writing, from using any software other than the designated video conferencing software or other modes of audio visual electronic communication, to facilitate the hearing of cases in electronic mode.

(3) (a) In criminal cases, where the person to be examined is a prosecution witness,or a Court witness, or a defence witness, or a person is to make submission for prosecution, or a person is to make submission for defence, the Advocate for the prosecution or defence or the accused, as the case may be, shall confirm to the Court the location of the person, and the time, place and technical facilities available for such video conferencing.

(b) In civil cases, parties requesting for recording statements of the person to be examined by video conferencing shall confirm to the Court, the location of the person, the willingness of such person to be examined through video conferencing and the availability of technical facilities for video conferencing at the time and place as agreed upon.

(4) In case the person to be examined is an accused, the prosecution shall confirm the location of the accused at the Remote Point.

(5) Video conferencing shall ordinarily take place during the Court hours:

Provided that the Court may pass suitable directions concerning the timing and the schedule of video conferencing as the circumstances may warrant.

(6) If the accused is in custody and not present at the Court Point, the Court shall order a multi-point video conference between Court Point, the witness and the accused in custody to facilitate recording of the statement of the witness including medical or other experts.

(7) The Court shall ensure that the defence of the accused is not prejudiced in any manner and that the safeguards provided in sub-rule (4) of rule 13 are observed.

(8) The Co-ordinator at the Remote Point shall be paid such amount as honorarium as may be directed by the Court in consultation with the parties.

20. Conduct of Proceedings. -

(1) All Advocates, required persons, the party in person or any other person permitted by the Court to remain physically or virtually present (hereinafter collectively

referred to as participants), shall have their presence recorded. However, in case participants are desirous that their face or name be masked, information to that effect shall be furnished to the Court Point Co-ordinator prior to the commencement of proceedings for the approval of the court.

(2) All Advocates, Required Persons, the party in person and/or any other person permitted by the Court to remain physically or virtually present (hereinafter collectively referred to as participants) shall abide by the requirements set out in Schedule I.

(3) The Co-ordinator at the Court Point shall send the link or Meeting ID and Room Details through the e-mail Id or mobile number furnished by the Advocate or required person to be virtually present by the Court and once the proceedings have commenced, no other persons shall be permitted to participate in the virtual hearing, except with the permission of the Court.

(4) Participation in the proceedings through video conferencing shall constitute consent by the participants to the proceedings being recorded.

(5) Establishment and disconnection of links between the Court Point and the Remote Point shall be regulated by orders of the Court.

(6) The Court shall satisfy itself that the Advocate, required person or any other participant that the Court deems necessary at the Remote Point or the Court Point can be seen and heard clearly and can clearly see and hear the Court.

(7) To ensure that video conferencing is conducted seamlessly, the difficulties, if any, experienced in connectivity must be brought to the notice of the Court at the earliest on the mobile number of the Court Point Coordinator which has been furnished to the participant before the commencement of the video conferencing. No complaint shall be entertained subsequently.

21. Third parties to the case. -

(1) Third parties may be allowed to remain present during video conferencing only upon a specific order of the Court. However, they shall be passive participants and shall not be allowed to make any submission without permission of the Court.

(2) Where, for any reason, a person unconnected with the case is present at the Remote Point, that person shall be identified by the Co-ordinator at the Remote Point at the beginning of the proceedings and the purpose of the presence of that person shall be conveyed to the Court. Such person shall continue to remain present only with the permission of the Court.

22. Costs of Video Conferencing. -

In the absence of rules prescribed by the concerned Court, the Court may take into consideration the following circumstances when determining and/or apportioning the costs of video conferencing:

(a) In criminal cases, the expenses of the video conferencing facility including expenses involved in preparing soft copies/certified copies of the Court record and transmitting the same to the Co-ordinator at the Remote Point, and the fee payable to the translator/interpreter/special educator, as the case may be, as also the fee payable to the Co-ordinator at the Remote Point, shall be borne by such party as directed by the Court.

(b) In civil cases, generally, the party making the request for recording evidence, through video conferencing shall bear the expenses.

(c) Besides the above, the Court may also make an order as to expenses as it considers appropriate, taking into account the rules/instructions regarding payment of expenses to the complainant and witnesses, as may be prevalent from time to time.

(d) It shall be open to the Court to waive the costs as warranted in a given situation.

23. Access to Legal Aid Clinics/Camps/Lok Adalats/Jail Adalats. -

(a) In conformity with the provisions of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 and the laws in force, in proceedings related to Legal Aid Clinics, Camps, Lok Adalats or Jail Adalats, any person who at the Remote Point is in Jail or Prison shall be examined by the Chairman/Secretary of the District Legal Service Authority or Members of Lok Adalats before passing any award or orders as per law.

(b) Such award or order shall have the same force as if it was passed by the regular Lok Adalat or Jail Adalat.

(c) Copy of the award or order and the record of proceedings shall be sent to the Remote Point.

24. Allowing persons who are not parties to the case to view the proceedings. -

To observe the requirement of an open Court proceeding, members of the public will be allowed to view Court hearings conducted through video conferencing, except proceedings ordered for reasons recorded in writing to be conducted in-camera. The Court shall endeavor to make available sufficient links (consistent with available bandwidth) for accessing the proceedings.

CHAPTER VI

MISCELLANEOUS

25. Interpretation. -

All questions relating to interpretation of these Rules shall be referred to the High Court, whose decision thereon shall be final.

26. Power to Relax. -

The High Court may if satisfied that the operation of any Rule is causing undue hardship, by order dispense with or relax the requirements of that Rule to such extent and subject to such conditions, as may be stipulated to deal with the case in a just and equitable manner.

27. Residual Provisions. -

Matters concerning which no express provision has been made in these Rules shall be decided by the Court consistent with the principle of furthering the interests of justice.

28. Rules to override other rules and etc.-

Notwithstanding anything contained in any provision of the G.R & C.O (Civil), G.R & C.O (Criminal), or any other Rules or Schemes for the time being in force, the provisions of these Rules shall prevail in cases where Court proceedings are conducted through Video Conferencing, except in proceedings held in the Vulnerable Witness Deposition Centers.

29. Repeal and Savings. -

(1) The Orissa High Court Video Conferencing for Courts Rules, 2020 is hereby repealed.

(2) Notwithstanding the repeal, provisions of the Orissa High Court Video Conferencing for Courts Rules, 2020 shall apply to:─

(a) Actions and proceedings commenced before these rules came into force.

(b) All notifications published, orders issued, under the Orissa High Court Video Conferencing Rules 2020, to the extent they are not repugnant to these rules, shall be deemed to have been made or issued under these rules.

BY ORDER OF THE HIGH COURT
ASANTA KUMAR DAS
REGISTRAR GENERAL

SCHEDULE I

(1) All participants shall wear sober attire consistent with the dignity of the proceedings. Advocates shall be appropriately dressed in professional attire prescribed under the Advocates Act, 1961. Police officials shall appear in the uniform prescribed for police officials under the relevant statute or orders. The attire for Judicial Officers and Court staff will be as specified in the relevant rules prescribed in that behalf by the High Court. The decision of the Presiding Judge or Officer as to the dress code will be final.

(2) Proceedings shall be conducted at the appointed date and time. Punctuality shall be scrupulously observed.

(3) The case will be called out and appearances shall be recorded on the direction of the Court.

(4) Every participant shall adhere to the courtesies and protocol that are followed in a physical Court. Judges will be addressed as "Madam/Sir" or "Your Honour". Officers will be addressed by their designation such as "Bench Officer/Court Master". Advocates will be addressed as "Learned Counsel/Senior Counsel"

(5) Advocates, Required Persons, parties in person and other participants shall keep their microphones muted till they are called upon to make submissions.

(6) Remote Users shall ensure that their devices are free from malware.

(7) Remote Users and the Co-ordinator at the Remote Point shall ensure that the Remote Point is situated in a quiet location, is properly secured and has sufficient internet coverage. Any unwarranted disturbance caused during video conferencing may if the Presiding Judge so directs render the proceedings *non-est*.

(8) All participants' cell phones shall remain switched off or in airplane mode during the proceedings.

(9) All participants should endeavor to look into the camera, remain attentive and not engage in any other activity during the proceedings.

(10) Background noise, unnecessary movements, and interruptions must be minimized to maintain the decorum of judicial proceedings.

(11) The use of offensive language, disrespectful behavior, or non-compliance with judicial instructions may lead to immediate removal from the session and potential legal consequences.

(12) Only Court have the discretion to mute or remove any participant violating these conduct rules.

SCHEDULE II

Request Form for Video Conference

1. Case Number / CNR Number (if any)…….
2. Cause Title…….
3. Proposed Date of conference (DD/MM/YYYY):…….
4. Location of the Court Point(s):……..
5. Location of the Remote Point(s):……
6. Names & Designation of the Participants at the Remote Point:…….. ……..
7. Reasons for Video Conferencing:
   In the matter of:……
8. Nature of Proceedings: [Final Hearing] ☐ [Motion Hearing] ☐ Others ☐

I have read and understood the provisions of Rules for Video Conferencing for Courts (hyperlink). I undertake to remain bound by the same to the extent applicable to me. I agree to pay video conferencing charges if so, directed by the Court.

Date: Signature of the applicant/authorised signatory:

(A) Bench assigned:

(B) Hearing:

Held on (DD/MM/WW):

Commencement Time:

End time:

Number of hours:

(C) Costs:

Overseas transmission charges if any:

To be Incurred by Applicant /Respondent: To be shared equally:

Waived; as ordered by the Court:

Date: Signature of the applicant/authorised signatory:

For use of the Registry / Court Point Co-ordinator

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